

## COLORED PEOPLE'S MASS MEETING.

### Large Gathering at Douglass Institute--The Recent Homicide on Tyson Street--Case of the Colored Man Killed by a Policeman--Action of the Meeting--Statement of Grievances--Denunciatory Resolutions.

[Reported for the Baltimore Sun.]

In pursuance of a call issued through the press to "all colored citizens and others in sympathy," a large meeting was held in Douglass Institute, on Lexington street, last evening, to take action in reference to the recent killing of Daniel L. Brown, colored. The homicide was committed at No. 41 Tyson street, near Richmond market, between 1 and 2 o'clock last Saturday morning, by policeman Patrick McDonald, of the northwestern district, while a social gathering of colored people was being held at the house.

The hall at Douglass Institute was crowded last evening by male and female colored persons, with two or three white men among the audience. The proceedings to be carried out had been previously prepared in writing by a committee, and the meeting adjourned in less than an hour after it was convened. At the suggestion of the chairman there was little or no applause, except after the adjournment, and the audience was orderly throughout. John W. Locks, George Myers, Lemuel G. Griffin, I. O. B. Williams, Dr. H. J. Brown, Richard Mason, Wm. Waters, Dr. W. H. Winsey, Prof. William Day, Wm. T. Gray, and one or two others, all colored, took seats upon the stage.

Lemuel G. Griffin called the meeting to order, and John W. Locks was made chairman. Mr. Locks returned thanks, and hoped that prudence would guide the deliberations. George Myers was chosen secretary.

#### OBJECT OF THE MEETING.

I. O. B. Williams stated the object of the meeting, which he read as follows:

The occasion that has summoned you here tonight is the recent murder of Daniel L. Brown, in the manner of whose death we feel deeply interested, and I sincerely believe that every citizen, when he looks into the facts of this case, will feel that a fearful outrage has been committed on society, and especially upon the colored people of this community.

The statement of Brown's wife made to me last Sunday morning, presents the following facts: That her husband had been employed for several years by Mr. Weeks, a gentleman largely engaged in sugar refining, and the kind treatment that her husband received from his employer assured her that they thought well of him. That Brown was a quiet, peaceable and strictly sober man, and that she was a member of Sharp-street Methodist Episcopal Church. Brown and wife lived in a house rented from Mr. Allen Martin, to whom they paid their rent promptly. Mrs. Brown said that parties or social entertainments were not of frequent occurrence in their house, the one on Friday night being the first one given since last winter, and that this one was not given by Brown and wife, but by a Mr. and Mrs. Gressom, who rented a part of the house from Brown. The man Gressom followed the sea, and was on the eve of leaving home for a foreign voyage. Gressom's wife intended after the departure of her husband to go to Pennsylvania. This was the immediate cause of this little social gathering, which resulted in the killing of Brown by a policeman, and the abrupt dispersion of those who had assembled there for a little social enjoyment. Mrs. Brown says that on Saturday morning, between the hours of one and two, the company was alarmed by a furious knocking at the front door. Gressom, on opening the door, met a policeman, who asked what was going on there. Whether it was a cake walk or a pay party, and if so, had they a permit? Gressom replied that it was neither and explained what it was. The policeman then demanded to see the proprietor of the house, at the same time using threats that if they did not make less noise he would arrest them all. Brown, who was lying on a lounge in the back room, on being informed by his wife that an officer wanted to see him, got up and went to the front door, when the officer used pretty much the same language to Brown that he did to Gressom. Brown answered the policeman by saying that he paid rent for his house and that they were not making any unusual or unreasonable noise; that they had the right to enjoy themselves. To this the officer responded, "none of your impudence, or I will snatch you all," to which Brown replied, "snatch." Mrs. Brown says that the policeman then struck her husband on the head with his capantoon, and as Brown fell against the closet she caught him in her arms. Seeing the officer draw his revolver she begged him not to shoot her husband. She says the officer pushed her aside, saying "damn your husband," and placing his revolver in the direction of Brown's head he fired, thus killing her husband.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that this is a truthful statement of the facts in this case, which alone should appeal for a rigid investigation by the proper authorities. But while this case is the occasion of our present alarm, there are other causes in connection with this which for years have kept us in a state of most anxious fear. Among these are, first, the little protection, if any, afforded us by the police in cases of assault where the offenders are white; second, the very frequent arrests made by officers, as we believe, without warrant or authority by entering houses occupied by colored people and taking them or their children before magistrates or to the station-house without showing any warrant for the arrest, but frequently in answer to the supplications of the parties or parents to know why they or their children are thus treated, are told by the officers to shut up, oftentimes threatening severe punishment unless they keep silent.

This is not to be construed as meaning all policemen, or even speaking disparagingly of the police force in general, for I am personally acquainted with a number of gentlemen on both the day and night force who are an honor to the community, and I believe would scorn to do a mean or unworthy act. Yet there are others of whom we have a just reason to complain, but feeling the responsibility of making such complaint we hesitate to say anything.

We have knowledge of cases which have occurred before magistrates where fines have been imposed upon children which their parents or friends had to pay to save them from being sent to prison, and in many of these cases there was no charge that could be legally sustained of committing any offense rendering them amenable to fine or imprisonment. These, in connection with many other things that time will not permit me to mention, together with the recent shooting of Daniel L. Brown, have made us feel that we are insecure in our lives and liberties, and have caused us to come here to night and attempt with such language nature has given us to lay our case before the people, and at the bar of public opinion plead for simple justice, humbly, yet earnestly, demanding that we be afforded the same protection in life, liberty and the pursuit of our happiness which white men enjoy as a right.

Is there anything unreasonable in this? We think not, though some in advance have condemned this meeting, saying it will do us harm. We sympathize with those who say so, for such has been our condition that many of us have thought it better to silently endure the evils that we were forced to bear than to speak, and perhaps bring greater evils upon us. But does not moral courage require something more than silence in a case like ours, and if we are not possessed of moral courage, has nature denied us the instinct of even insects and beasts? Does not the worm writhe and squirm when trod upon? We believe that when our case is fully understood all good people will take the lead in securing ample justice for us. Suppose the white people had the same cause, what would be seen in a hall like this? It would be crowded with the best citizens of Baltimore, and the voices of the speakers would be heard against the enormity of the outrage perpetrated, and their appeal would be sustained by the pulpit and the press. We to-night make appeal to all lovers of right and justice to give our case a favorable hearing and unite with us in demanding equal and exact justice to the violators of law, whether the offenders be white or black.

#### PREAMBLE AND RESOLUTIONS.

George Myers, the secretary, then read the following preamble and resolutions, which were unanimously adopted:

Whereas the shooting of Daniel L. Brown by a policeman of the northwestern district, on Saturday morning last, between the hours of 1 and 2 o'clock, while the said Brown and his family were peaceably enjoying the pleasures of a little party given by one of the inmates, was a wholly unjustifiable assault upon a citizen in his own family; and whereas said policeman did enter upon the premises of David L. Brown, and did there, without cause or reasonable provocation, assault said Brown by striking a murderous blow on the head with his club, knocking Brown senseless, so that he fell against a closet and was caught in the arms of his wife, which alone prevented his falling to the floor; and whereas, while Brown was in this helpless condition, and being sustained on his feet alone by the arms of his wife, the officer drew his revolver, and, regardless of the prayerful entreaties of Brown's wife to "spare my husband," "don't shoot him," said, "damn your husband," thrust the wife aside, placed the revolver to Brown's head and deliberately fired, killing the said Brown; and whereas this deed was done by a policeman, a guardian of the peace, and, as we confidently believe, without cause or provocation, and therefore without justification: Therefore

Be it Resolved, That this shameful murder of an unoffending man in the presence of his family, by being shot down like a dog, and that by a policeman, for no other cause but that he was a harmless colored citizen, forms one of the most inhuman and outrageous murders that ever blackened the annals of crime, and calls for quick and speedy punishment of the guilty, who has, by this abuse of authority, brought distress and sorrow to a once happy family, and cast a shadow of gloom upon a large number of friends.

Be it further Resolved, That we, as colored citizens, feeling that our rights to the pursuit of happiness have been struck down by this foul and cruel murder, do appeal to all lovers of justice to assist us in trying to maintain our rights before the law, and to have those punished who violate the law, whether he be a policeman or a colored man.

Resolved further, That we regard this murderous assault upon an unoffending colored citizen, in his own house, as the culmination of a series of oppressive acts towards our race. Our people are arrested and fined or thrown in jail by

magistrates and constables on the most trivial and untenable charges--our children are arrested and fined in many cases for resisting personal assaults, and we appeal to all good citizens to aid us in securing an equal protection from the law and its officers, asking for nothing but what justice and humanity clearly entitle us.

#### OTHER RESOLUTIONS.

Dr. H. T. Brown presented the following resolutions, which he had prepared, and they were also unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That we counsel moderation, forbearance and an ample use of discretion on the part of colored citizens, believing as we do that when the facts of this and other cases shall become well known and judicially investigated, the truth will be seen, and the unfeeling, deliberate criminals will receive the just punishment for their crimes.

Resolved, That it is gratifying to us to say that as a people we are obedient to the laws of the State, as is fully shown by the very many serious and important criminalities and petty offenses of which we are made the daily subject, and that without complaint, yet we are not submissive enough for those persons who still retain their prejudices against color.

Resolved, That the editorials in the Baltimore American on the wanton murder of Daniel L. Brown, and in defense of justice, law and the grievances under which we labor, with the much-needed rebuke administered by the Baltimore Sun, express our undivided views, and for which we return our sincere gratitude, feeling that we certainly need the interposition of some strong power to assist in protecting and defending us in the civil and peaceable exercise of the common rights of man.

Resolved, That we court impartial sympathy by appealing to the board of police commissioners, magistrates, judges of courts, and all others in authority, also to all good citizens, to give us that support and protection to which every citizen is entitled under the laws of the State.

Resolved, That we deeply sympathize with the family of our late friend, Daniel L. Brown, feeling the depth of the misfortune under which they are laboring, and that all legal means will be availed of to vindicate the majesty of the law.

#### CONCLUDING PROCEEDINGS.

After the adoption of Dr. Brown's resolutions, a motion to adjourn was made from the platform, to which much opposition was made in the audience, several persons asking the privilege of speaking. The chair put the motion, and, although it was probably defeated, he declared the meeting adjourned. Zachariah Sharper at this juncture ascended the platform, and in a loud voice claimed attention. He said: "I wish to say to all that Daniel L. Brown was a member of the great United Order of Odd-Fellows, and I want all the members of that order to bear it in mind, and use all the pecuniary means they can raise to aid in having the man punished who killed him." These remarks were received with shouts of applause. In a few minutes afterwards the crowd quietly dispersed.